

Aberdeen Planning Guidance 2023: Temporary Buildings

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1. Introduction

1.1 Status of Aberdeen Planning Guidance

This Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG) supports the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This APG relates to, and expands on the following policies in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan:

- Policy D1 Quality Placemaking

Given the timing of the Local Development Plan, a pragmatic approach has been taken to changes in the planning system. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted following the examination and subsequent modification of the Local Development, and the publication of a draft version of this APG for consultation. As a result, some terminology referred to in this APG may vary from the new NPF4 policy framework. References to the former Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP) have been largely removed from this APG to minimise confusion, and wherever possible updated references to NPF4 have been included. Occasional references to SPP and the SDP have been retained where necessary to explain the source of data and/or essential context for the APG, but it should be noted that the LDP together with NPF4 now forms the basis of the statutory development plan.

1.2 Introduction to Topic / Background

The Council acknowledges that there will be occasions when temporary buildings will be required to fulfil a specific temporary need. Without careful consideration the placement and length of time a temporary building is in place could detrimentally impact upon the visual amenity of an area. This Planning Guidance provides guidance on how the Council will consider proposals for portable and modular / demountable buildings. Please note there is separate guidance for Gypsy/Traveller sites.

1.3 Climate Change

This document outlines what temporary buildings are appropriate in any given situation to ensure that, in the longer term, the most energy efficient structures serve the city. This document therefore aligns with the [UN Sustainable Development Goal](#) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. It also aligns with [Aberdeen Adapts](#) priorities for addressing climate change in the planning and build of city buildings and Goal 1: Protecting buildings and preserving heritage.

1.4 Health and Wellbeing

Where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. How places are designed within their urban or natural environment are vital to the health of the people and communities within them. Maintaining access to greenspace, through considered placement of temporary buildings will ensure the ability to be physically active.

This guidance can help to achieve Priority 1 of the Public Health Priorities for Scotland - A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.

This guidance is deemed to have minimal impact on population health and wellbeing. This means that, whilst it is unlikely a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) screening report will be requested to support any planning application, this will depend on the detail and scope of the application. There may be elements of the proposals that relate to the health and wellbeing of the population that warrant consideration. If that is the case, then a screening HIA will be required, and further advice on this will be provided.

2. Aberdeen Planning Guidance

2.1 Does it Need Planning Permission?

In some circumstances temporary buildings may be covered by Permitted Development Rights and therefore **would not require planning permission** (see Part 4 (Temporary Buildings and Uses) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992).

These circumstances are summarised as follows:

- Planning permission is not required for the erection or placing of moveable structures (including buildings) required as part of a temporary use taking place on land for 28 days or less. This would, for example, allow a portable building to be located within a park, field or public open space during an outdoor event or open-air market.
- Planning permission is not required for temporary buildings required during construction work on land or on adjoining land. This would include, for example, a contractor's site office or storage container located on a construction site or on land adjacent to a construction site.

Planning permission is required for all other temporary buildings, regardless of how long they would be present on the land.

Within conservation areas or the grounds of a listed building it may not be possible for a temporary building to be accommodated without adversely affecting the character of the conservation area or setting of the listed building. In these circumstances applications are **likely to be refused**.

2.2 What Needs to be Submitted

Applications for planning permission should be accompanied by a statement explaining:

- the reason a temporary building is required;
- the proposed use of the temporary building;
- the period of time the temporary building would be required; and,
- where applicable, what the permanent solution to any on-going accommodation requirement would be.

Removal of temporary structures and restoration of the site will be required within an agreed timescale (generally three months) following the completion of the development.

2.3 General Principles of Siting

Temporary buildings should:

- Normally be located to the rear of existing buildings. Location to the front of the principal elevation, especially where it is visible from a public area e.g. road, path, lane or public open space, will rarely be accepted. Siting to the side of a building may be acceptable if it is not visible from a public area and is adequately screened.
- Avoid the loss of existing parking spaces or turning areas. Dependent on the use and agreed duration of the temporary building, additional parking may be required. Particular attention should be paid to the need to encourage sustainable travel. Further information is available in the Transport and Accessibility Planning Guidance, and early discussion with the Council's Roads Development Management Team is recommended.
- Avoid landscaped areas, especially those with established tree or shrub planting. In exceptional circumstances where this is unavoidable, justification must be outlined. In such circumstances, a Condition will be attached to the permission requiring new landscape proposals to be established in an agreed timescale following the removal of the temporary building.

2.4 Specific Temporary Building Categories

Portable Buildings

'Portable buildings' are typically stand-alone, self-contained buildings. In some instances, they are manufactured and fitted out in a factory. They are delivered in one piece by road and craned into position, sometimes supported on jack-up legs. Examples include tent-like metal framed structures covered in plastic fabric, structures which utilise simple foundations or are bolted to a concrete slab, portacabins and shipping containers.

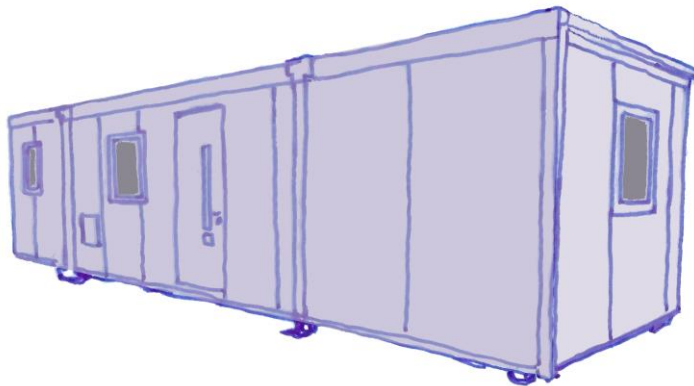


Figure 1

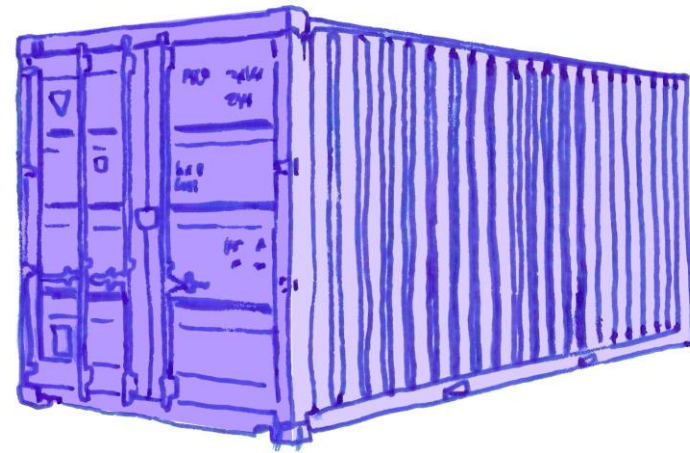


Figure 2

The Council consider that in most circumstances three years is a reasonable timescale for portable buildings given their basic nature. Should a further period be required, a new planning application would be necessary and the Council would consider that on its merits. During this assessment the Council will consider whether:

- the buildings have been maintained in a satisfactory condition, and;
- the applicant can present a justifiable case for the continued use of a temporary building rather than the erection of a permanent replacement.

Modular / Demountable Buildings

'Modular' and 'Demountable' buildings can be more permanent in nature than portable buildings. They are normally constructed from two or more factory-built steel-framed 'modules' which are connected to each other. The modules are transported to site by road, and then craned into prepared foundations. Temporary buildings resting on bricks or concrete blocks will not be regarded as demountable buildings.

In recognition of their more permanent nature and higher quality, modular / demountable buildings, a case may be made for allowing the approval of the building for an initial period longer than three years, however this will not usually exceed five years. The Council will consider each case on its individual merits.

Temporary buildings for residential use will only be considered appropriate when required to accommodate temporary workers for construction of a major infrastructure project. Such proposals must demonstrate that satisfactory provision of potable water, foul drainage and refuse disposal facilities can be provided.

The temporary siting of a static caravan whilst a replacement dwellinghouse is constructed will be acceptable in principle. Such caravans should be located within the same development site and will be restricted to being present for the duration of the demolition of the old dwellinghouse and construction of the new dwellinghouse.

3. Summary of Policy

Applicants must justify a need for the temporary building, outline the use and proposed length of time it is required. Where applicable, a future more permanent solution should be outlined.

Temporary buildings will not normally be considered for approval if a listed building or the setting of a Conservation Area is affected.

Temporary buildings should be discreetly sited, usually to the rear of any existing buildings and screened from public spaces if necessary. The loss of parking or turning areas should be avoided as should the loss of any landscaped ground, particularly if including trees or large shrubs.

The type of temporary building will be a material factor in deciding how long the permission should last for. Removal of temporary structures and restoration of the site will be required within an agreed timescale.